

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

CHAIR

Public Safety Committee

MEMBER

Anti-Graffiti Policy Committee

Finance & Personnel Committee

Steering & Rules Committee



ROBERT G. DONOVAN

Alderman, 8th District

May 18, 2009

Tom Barrett, Mayor
City Hall, Room 201
200 E. Wells St.
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Mayor Barrett,

I can't tell you how pleased I am that the State of Wisconsin has finally stepped up to the plate to save me from myself. And with all of the covert meetings on the smoking ban – behind closed doors and out of public view during the run-up to the legislature's votes – the secrecy would surely make Elliot Ness and his band of Untouchables proud.

But what I am most proud of are your bold comments on the news the other night – that if the state did not act on the smoking ban, you personally would have led the charge for a local ban in Milwaukee. Good for you Tom – you fooled them again. Apparently I'm the only person who remembers you were in the Witness Protection Program (you were nowhere to be found!) when two years ago 300 people showed up to City Hall to protest a proposed local smoking ban.

On the subject of deception, I can't emphasize enough the importance of continuing to fool the general public in an effort to advance our cause.

For example, given the incredible fiscal challenges facing Milwaukee and the State of Wisconsin, it remains absolutely critical that we as elected officials continue to address issues such as smoking bans and seat belt laws so as to appear like we are actually doing something.

Also, it is critically important that we continue to ensure our committee meetings remain boring, uninviting and most inconvenient for most citizens to attend.

Your continued emphasis on the fact that you are a nice guy and that you "feel people's pain" is most definitely paying off.

We must continue to avoid decision making at all costs. We are both fully aware that making decisions, especially important ones, or on occasion, providing leadership, can be offensive to certain individuals or groups. We must never offend.

Your correct analysis that the average voter in Milwaukee has a short memory is critical to the overall success of our initiatives.

We must do everything within our power to squelch the few but growing number of individuals who have actually said, some of them publically, "after five years, shouldn't we be expecting more?" These threatening thoughts must be eradicated.

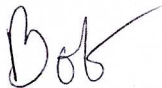
But Tom, I have the absolute coup de grace. I know how deeply you lament your continued attacks on the Milwaukee Fire Department. I have the answer to all of your problems: Because the smoking ban is critical, absolutely critical to Milwaukee and Wisconsin's future, enforcement of this law must be priority #1. May I humbly suggest that the Milwaukee Police Department not be the enforcement agency? Let's face it, they're tied down with the mundane issues of shootings, murders and general disorder – all the issues we love to avoid.

Let's have the fire department enforce the smoking ban! Who better to sniff out illegal smoke? Who better to literally stamp out this insipid crime? Instead of debating the need for a 5th man on our ladder trucks, with these new responsibilities, we may need to go to 6 or 7 per truck. Indeed, we may need to double the fire ranks to deal with this all-important issue.

It makes imminent sense, Tom. Think about it. In the event that some malcontent loses his head and actually lights up in some tavern and an innocent individual gets a nose full of second hand smoke, it is only the fire department that is trained and equipped to handle such medical emergencies.

Finally Tom, just a gentle reminder that there may be an occasion where issues such as rising taxes, public safety, crumbling roads and infrastructure, failing schools – all these and more – where some misguided individual may expect a decision, or, heaven forbid, leadership from us. It's critical that we just say no. We must continue our efforts to avoid these troublesome temptations. With God's help, we will get through this.

Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bob", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Robert G. Donovan
Alderman, 8th District